



GEOFF ANTHONY
... goal a game

BLUES FIRST TO SHOW ON TOP

By MIKE WHITESMAN : Maidstone Utd. 1, Wycombe W. 4

THREE down, 35 to go . . . and Wycombe Wanderers survive as the only remaining 100 per centers even at this early stage of the Isthmian League campaign.

Minus skipper John Delaney, goalkeeper John Maskell, and the still casualty-listed Tony Horseman and Les Hartridge at Maidstone United's Athletic ground on Saturday, they added goals 10 to 13 onto their fast-rising tally.

But Maidstone's determination to break into the points standard themselves was barely represented in Wanderers' victory margin. In itself it was more a testimonial to the way the home side burnt themselves out in search of an equaliser during the 20 minutes following half-time.

Both Ian Rundle and Vince Faulkner stepped shakily into defence for their first League outings, while Keith Brunt switched roles to midfield, allowing Bernie Bremer to fill in on the wing for holiday-bound Johnny Hutchinson.

And Wanderers looked weakened, perhaps thankful their opponents were not Sutton, Enfield or Hitchin — or various others of the prospective Isthmian hierarchy, all of whom would be willing to give almost anything to sabotage the Blues before they fully get into a championship stride.

Maidstone made enough early running to warrant the lead they took after seven minutes. Kevin O'Brien, between the 'sticks' for one of his rare Saturday appearances, was beaten by the power of Micky Angel's shot.

No more beaten however, than Wanderers' patched up defence by United's build up, with John Mears as architect and Mackman as labourer.

The bearded Mears, previously with Leytonstone and Brentwood, has been proving the brains and driving power behind United. And Saturday was no exception.

Thanks largely to his creative planning, Wanderers were behind for the first time this season; even if only for eight minutes.

A Bernie Bremer corner kick flew off the left flank to be kicked from the line by a defender, and returned goalwards off the boot of Keith Searle, to even the score at 1-1.

Safety seemed a long way off for Wycombe after their tedious journey into the heart of Kent, when Mears again set Maidstone's promising attack in motion. Indeed, United are essentially promise without, as yet, fulfilment. Ray Hutchins' fine effort to finish Mear's 22nd minute move went just wide.

As Wanderers began to press in the later stages of the half, so came one of the few flare-ups of the afternoon, resulting in a talking to for opposing number eights, Angel and Blunt, who soon after was lectured again—

Goalkeeper Micky Trice also saved United in the 38th minute, running bravely off his line to block out Geoff Anthony's route to the net.

But two minutes later, O'Brien also had to intervene as Buxle put the ball to Angel, who flicked (deflected?) it, with Kev going the wrong way. Quick the Wycombe keeper twisted back to palm the danger round a post.

Winning a third consecutive corner into injury time, Wycombe profited from Debnam's failure to clear after Larry Pritchard's cross had been headed down. Bremer sent in his first shot of the day below bar level to make it 2-1.

The second period became an out and out gamble with Maidstone rolling the dice on Wanderers' breaking the bank. United pitched all their resources into their stake, and it might have been worth the risk.

Fatigue cut short the last period of Maidstone pressure and Wycombe took over, with easily enough in reserve to drive further ahead.

Sheer effort by English striker, Pritchard—not to mention his other claims to a goal—saw him through 11 minutes from time.

Offsetting three challenges from behind as he worked towards the home net, he stumbled and lost his footing, but still managed to push the ball forward somehow, with Bremer on the line to make absolutely certain of the score. Credit or field was Pritchard's, even though record-wise, Bremer is the official scorer.

Also deserving of a goal for the best of his three League performances to date was Geoff Anthony. And sure enough he continued his goal-a-match run four minutes later.

Blunt put the ball across to the right wing for the little Welshman, totally unmarked as he was, to place goal number four just inside the left-hand post, with Trice beaten.

MAIDSTONE UNITED: M. Trice, R. Evans, J. Mears, G. Mackman, P. McGuinness, P. Debnam, C. Osborne, M. Angel, W. Wood, F. Hutchins, D. Buxton, Sub: R. Ba (not used).

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: K. O'Brien, I. Rundle, C. Gale, J. Powell, V. Faulkner, B. Baker, C. Anthony, K. Blunt, K. Searle, I. Pritchard, B. Bremer.

Referee: Mr. K. Underwood (Romford).